



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteer Position Description

Title: Midewin General Restoration Volunteer

Purpose: Assist Midewin's Ecologist, Horticulturist, Botanist and Invasive Species Specialist with natural areas restoration and management on the nation's largest tallgrass prairie restoration effort. Restoration volunteers help directly with part one of our mission to conserve, restore, and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants. Native biodiversity must be protected and restored because there is only 0.01% prairie habitat left in Illinois, *The Prairie State*.

Duties and Responsibilities: Activities for general restoration volunteer days on Thursdays may not be planned until the day before and will be based on need and weather conditions. Saturday volunteer day activities will be announced in advance. Please RSVP so we can notify you of changes or rare cancellations. Be prepared for outdoor or indoor work, as we may do more than one activity per day. Midewin will provide tools, safety gear and water. Bring your own lunch unless otherwise notified. Dress in layers with sturdy field boots. Volunteers' responsibilities may include the following:

- Planting native plugs in prairie restoration areas or production seedbeds
- Harvesting seed at the production seedbeds or wild populations on Midewin's remnants or local preserves
- Cleaning seed using manual techniques and/or machines
- Remove/control invasive vegetation
- Transporting tender young plants into and out of winter storage
- Soil preparation, mixing and filling trays
- Weeding and/or mulching the production seedbeds
- Applying herbicide if licensed through Dept of Agriculture
- Assisting with greenhouse management such as transplanting and caring for seedlings
- Preparing batches of prairie seed mixes for broadcasting in restoration areas

Department and Location: Under the direction of Midewin's Ecologist, Horticulturist, Botanist and/or Invasive Species Specialist, volunteers may have several jobs within Midewin's Restoration Team. Meeting locations are at the River Road Seedbeds or the Horticulture Building at Midewin's Supervisor's Office (SO). Volunteers may caravan to various work sites on Midewin, including restored areas and native remnant habitats.

Qualifications: Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation to volunteer day meeting locations and possibly to the worksite. Volunteers should be prepared for variable weather, uneven terrain, and hazardous insects and plants. Volunteers should be flexible, cooperative and have the ability to work as a team and/or individually. Previous experience with restoration is not required for most of the activities above. Children of all ages can assist with seed harvesting at the production seedbeds. Children ages 7 and up can assist with any activities listed above in the first column. Some activities are handicap accessible such as planting seed trays, seed cleaning and some aspects of seed harvest. We can usually accommodate many different abilities with advance notice.

Time Commitment: Restoration volunteer days are scheduled every Thursday year round, rain or shine, from 9am-2:30pm and occasional Saturdays. These are posted on the Event Calendar at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/midewin/workingtogether/volunteering/?cid=stelprdb5303376> on Midewin's website. Punctuality is necessary for workdays that take place in remote or locked areas. Giving the Volunteer Coordinator at least one-day notice of attendance will allow better accommodation for individuals. Groups of 10 or more must RSVP two weeks in advance. Midewin encourages volunteers to participate, at minimum, once every season in order to further appreciate seed processing, invasive management and prairie restoration.

Training: Each workday will begin with an orientation to Midewin's history and mission. Instructions and safety information for each specific activity will be explained at every workday, throughout the day. Some volunteers may be interested in acquiring their herbicide license through the IL Dept. of Ag. If approved by Midewin staff, training materials are provided and license fee is paid for by Midewin (License renewal fee will not be paid if it is not used). Other certifications/trainings that may be offered and paid for include government motor vehicle ID card and refresher training, background check (if required) to access certain buildings, trailer training, power tools, UTV training and First Aid/CPR. Additional responsibilities could become applicable or available to this position in the future that might require additional training and/or certification. These additional responsibilities will be determined by the program managers and offered to selected volunteers.

Working Conditions/Physical Effort: Restoration volunteers are covered by the Volunteer Agreement (Form 301a) while performing duties described by this position description during the season(s) listed or scheduled shifts. Volunteers must read, sign and consent to the U.S. Forest Service Job Hazard Analysis, which includes emergency plans, safety requirements and recommended best practices. Volunteers may work in variable conditions including:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens
- May be working near hazardous plants or insects
- Walking on uneven, possibly wet terrain and/or through tall vegetation
- Using a variety of hand tools and possibly some small power tools
- Standing for up to 2 hours or more at a time
- Light to moderate lifting

Benefits: Working outside is a pleasant activity and is very therapeutic. The activities listed above are appropriate for families and individuals of all ages to work together. Midewin's volunteer staff receives ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other staff. Volunteers that contribute three or more individual volunteer visits in the fiscal year will receive an invitation to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November. Midewin's volunteer staff receives the bimonthly Prairie Telegraph. Volunteers may be featured in the telegraph, newspaper articles and/or US Forest Service success stories. Awards can be received for outstanding, innovative and/or long term, core volunteers.